

In accordance with Article II, Section 17 of the Maryland Constitution, I have today vetoed Senate Bill 664.

Senate Bill 664 would provide a \$2,000 Maryland income tax deduction for certain qualifying volunteer fire, rescue, or emergency medical services personnel. Under this bill, the State would lose \$1 million in revenues and local governments would lose \$500,000 in fiscal year 1996.

I certainly recognize the value of the public service provided by the State's volunteer fire, rescue and emergency personnel, and I applaud the efforts of these dedicated volunteers. This Administration has been extremely supportive of fire, rescue and emergency services, and I have made every effort to restore the State aid provided for these services to their pre-cost containment levels. Furthermore, this Administration proposed and worked diligently to enact legislation to provide a permanent funding source for emergency services, by earmarking a portion of motor vehicle registration fees for such services. In vetoing this bill, it is not my intent to appear unappreciative of the sacrifices made by the thousands of dedicated volunteers who provide emergency services to the people of Maryland.

Unfortunately, at this time, the State cannot afford the annual \$1 million reduction in general fund revenues mandated by Senate Bill 664. The Department of Budget and Fiscal Planning has predicted that in the near future, the growth in spending as a result of existing statutory requirements will far outweigh projected revenue growth. Therefore, it is unwise to allow revenues to erode when these funds will be needed in the forthcoming years.

For this reason, I have vetoed Senate Bill 664.

Sincerely,
William Donald Schaefer
Governor

Senate Bill No. 664

AN ACT concerning

Income Tax – Subtraction Modification for Volunteer Fire, Rescue, or Emergency Medical Services Personnel

FOR the purpose of providing a subtraction modification under the Maryland income tax in certain amounts for certain qualifying volunteer fire, rescue, or emergency medical services members; providing certain criteria for qualification for the subtraction modification; requiring fire, rescue, or emergency medical services organizations to maintain certain records and provide certain reports relating to certain volunteer services; requiring the Maryland State Firemen's Association to submit a certain annual report to the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services and the Comptroller's Office; providing for a certain penalty under certain circumstances; providing for the application of this Act; and generally relating to a subtraction modification under the Maryland income tax in certain amounts for certain qualifying volunteer fire, rescue, or emergency medical services members.